

fast and came out on top. In the end, the Wildcats refused to lose. They ended with a 29 3 record.

The Billings community is justifiably proud of the extraordinary group of young and talented future leaders on the Wildcats Basketball Team.

I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Billings Wildcats Basketball Team, the Missouri Class 2 State Champions.

HONORING ATTORNEY EDWARD BLACKMON, JR. FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE GREENWOOD, MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2012

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable public servant, Attorney Edward Blackmon, Jr. Attorney Blackmon was born and raised in Canton, Mississippi. He is a graduate of Tougaloo College, where he obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science. He received his Juris Doctorate from the George Washington University Law Center in Washington, DC in 1973.

Shortly after completing George Washington University, Attorney Blackmon began practicing law in Mississippi at the North Mississippi Rural Legal Services in Greenwood, Mississippi. Attorney Blackmon remained with North Mississippi Rural Legal Services until 1974 when he entered into private practice in Canton, Mississippi with the Law Firm of Blackmon & Smith. In 1989, Attorney Blackmon and his wife, Attorney Barbara Blackmon, formed the Law Firm of Blackmon & Blackmon in Canton where he currently serves as the firm's Senior Partner.

Attorney Blackmon has extensive experience in personal injury, products liability and defense law. His clientele reads like a "Who's Who" among corporate America. Attorney Blackmon has defended some of the nation's top corporate companies in civil litigation, and obtained hundreds of millions of dollars in civil awards for damages on behalf of his clients.

Attorney Blackmon also has lengthy experience in criminal law defense as well. During a 20 year period involving more than 50 defense trials, Attorney Blackmon excelled without losing a single case.

He is a 24 year member of the Mississippi House of Representatives, where he previously served as Chairman of the Judiciary Committee. In other capacities, he has served as Chairman of the Legislative Black Mississippi State House of Representatives Caucus, President of the Magnolia Bar Association, and is currently serving as a member of the Tougaloo College Board of Trustees, in addition to the George Washington University School of Law Board of Advisors.

In 2002 Attorney Blackmon was named by the National Law Journal as one of the Nations Top 10 Litigators. Among his many achievements in his role as a public servant, Attorney Blackmon is most proud of his work as a State Legislator. He has led redistricting efforts that led to the reapportionment of legislative and judicial districts which increased the number of minority representation in each of those offices.

Attorney Blackmon and his wife, Attorney Barbara Blackmon, are celebrated for their philanthropic services in the area of education. They have made substantial financial contributions to their alma maters, Tougaloo College and Jackson State University, in addition to a number of other institutions and individual students seeking to advance themselves through higher education. Attorney Blackmon is a member of the Cade Chapel Missionary Baptist Church and is the father of four children, Janessa, Madison, Bradford and Stephen.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Attorney Blackmon for his dedication and service to the state of Mississippi.

CELEBRATING GLADYS WILLIAMS' 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. ROBERT T. SCHILLING

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2012

Mr. SCHILLING. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure and honor that I congratulate Ms. Gladys L. Williams of East Moline, Illinois on a momentous milestone, her 100th birthday, which will be on April 15, 2012.

Born in Kansas on April 15, 1912, the very day the Titanic sank, Gladys grew up to be tough, but a dedicated and wonderful mother whose kids always knew she had their backs. Along with her husband A.H. and her three children, Gladys moved around the country more than 30 times over the years due to her husband's job with the Rock Island Railroad. The family moved in and out of the Quad Cities nearly a dozen times until they finally made Moline home in 1954, around the time A.H. was named General Manager.

Gladys and her family have been active in Moline's First Baptist Church, and she worked in an area high school's cafeteria before eventually relocating to East Moline 16 years ago. Her family did the math recently, and determined that Gladys has been blessed with 17 grandchildren, 36 great-grandchildren, and 21 great-great-grandchildren.

East Moline Mayor John Thodos declared April 15th, 2012 "Gladys Williams Day" in honor of this remarkable woman. Mr. Speaker and my distinguished colleagues, I respectfully ask that you join me in wishing Gladys a very happy 100th birthday, and the best as she celebrates this joyous occasion with her friends and many members of her family.

COMMEMORATING BELARUSAN INDEPENDENCE DAY BY FIGHTING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN BELARUS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2012

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, March 25, Belarusian-Americans commemorated Belarusian Independence Day. On that date in 1918, during World War I, the Belarusian National Republic was declared. Although independence was short-lived and Belarus forcibly subjected to Soviet rule, it did mark an historically significant milestone in the

aspirations of the Belarusian people for freedom and their own unique identity.

While Belarus became independent in 1991 with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, this independence today is under threat thanks to the dictatorial rule of Alexander Lukashenko, who has relentlessly squelched dissent, strangled democratic institutions and the rule of law, stifled human rights and political liberties, and refused to reform the Soviet-type state-dominated economy. This has made Belarus dangerously vulnerable to Russian influence and has greatly weakened its prospects for integration into the European family of nations.

The brutal crackdown that began 15 months ago with the fraudulent December 19, 2010 election persists. Its most recent manifestation is the barring of numerous opposition leaders, human rights activists and independent journalists from traveling abroad—yet another in a litany of violations of Belarus' OSCE commitments. Especially egregious is the continued imprisonment of democratic opposition leaders and activists, and human rights defenders Andrei Sannikau, Mikalai Statekevich, Zmitser Bandarenka, Ales Byalyatski, Syarhei Kavalenka, Zmitser Dashkevich, Pavel Seviarynets, and others, many of whom face inhumane conditions in detention. I'd like to add my voice to those of countless Belarusians and Belarusian-Americans calling for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners in Belarus.

Mr. Speaker, in January the President signed into law the Belarus Democracy and Human Rights Act of 2011, which I authored. This law strengthens, in view of Lukashenko's crackdown, two earlier laws I wrote promoting democracy and supporting the Belarusian people in their struggle to replace the Lukashenko dictatorship with a representative government that will respect human rights and democratic values. But Congress's efforts on behalf of the Belarusian people can't end there—I'd like to ask my colleagues to continue to raise Belarusian human rights issues with the administration, with foreign parliamentarians, and, whenever we encounter them, with officials of the Lukashenko dictatorship.

HONORING MAYOR RUDY GIULIANI

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2012

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I have great admiration for Mayor Rudy Giuliani. He is a courageous American leader who speaks with authority when it comes to the safety and security of the American people. On Saturday, March 24, 2012, on the occasion of the Iranian New Year, Nowrouz, Mayor Giuliani addressed a conference in Paris attended by nearly 1,000 people to discuss ways to counter the Iranian threat and standing with the people of Iran and their organized opposition.

His remarks are crucial since they were preceded just a few days before by a campaign by unidentified U.S. Government officials who wanted to silence him and other senior former U.S. Government officials who had called for regime change in Iran and support for the Iranian opposition. Mayor Giuliani was flanked by other former officials including Attorney General Michael Mukasey, Homeland Security